

AMENDMENT

Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing reflects amendments to the claims and replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in this application.

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1. (Currently amended) An isolated, immunogenic, mutant non-structural ("NS") HCV polypeptide comprising a mutant NS3 polypeptide having a deletion of at least ~~200 amino acids~~ from the N-terminal portion of NS3 the amino acid sequence corresponding to amino acids 1027-1241 of HCV-1, wherein said deletion functionally disrupts the catalytic domain of NS3 and further wherein said polypeptide comprises ~~the~~ a C-terminal portion of NS3.

2-3. (Canceled)

4. (Currently amended) The polypeptide of claim 1, wherein said NS polypeptide further comprises [NS3,] NS4 and NS5.

5. (Currently amended) The polypeptide of claim 1, wherein said NS polypeptide consists of said mutant NS3 polypeptide, NS4 and NS5.

6. (Currently amended) The polypeptide of claim 1, wherein said NS polypeptide consists of said mutant NS3 polypeptide and NS5.

7. (Original) The polypeptide of claim 6, wherein said NS5 polypeptide consists of NS5a.

8. (Original) The polypeptide of claim 6, wherein said NS5 polypeptide consists of NS5b.

9. (Currently amended) The polypeptide of claim 1, wherein said NS polypeptide consists of said mutant NS3 polypeptide and NS4.

10. (Original) The polypeptide of claim 9, wherein said NS4 polypeptide consists of NS4a.

11. (Original) The polypeptide of claim 9, wherein said NS4 polypeptide consists of NS4b.

12. (Original) The polypeptide of claim 4, further comprising a second viral polypeptide that is not NS3, NS4 or NS5 of HCV.

fr 13. (Previously presented) The polypeptide of claim 12, wherein the second viral polypeptide comprises an HCV Core polypeptide ("C") or immunogenic fragment thereof.

14. (Original) The polypeptide of claim 13, wherein the C polypeptide is truncated.

15. (Original) The polypeptide of claim 14, wherein the truncation is at amino acid 121.

16. (Original) The polypeptide of claim 12, wherein the polypeptide further comprises an HCV envelope protein ("E").

17. (Original) The polypeptide of claim 16, wherein the E is E1.

18. (Original) The polypeptide of claim 16, wherein the E is E2.

19. (Original) A composition comprising

(a) the polypeptide of claim 1; and

(b) a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient.

20-31. (Canceled)

32. (Currently amended) The polypeptide of claim 1, wherein the polypeptide [further] comprises the sequence of amino acids of SEQ ID NO:9.

33-42. (Canceled)

43. (New) The polypeptide of claim 1, wherein said mutant NS3 polypeptide has a deletion of the amino acid sequence corresponding to amino acids 1027-1241 of HCV-1 but retains the remainder of the NS3 domain.

44. (New) The polypeptide of claim 43, wherein said NS polypeptide further comprises NS4 and NS5.

45. (New) The polypeptide of claim 43, wherein said NS polypeptide consists of said mutant NS3 polypeptide, NS4 and NS5.

46. (New) The polypeptide of claim 43, wherein the polypeptide consists of the sequence of amino acids of SEQ ID NO:9.

47. (New) A composition comprising  
(a) the polypeptide of claim 12; and  
(b) a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient.

48. (New) A composition comprising  
(a) the polypeptide of claim 32; and  
(b) a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient.

49. (New) A composition comprising  
(a) the polypeptide of claim 43; and

(b) a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient.

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50. (New) A composition comprising

(a) the polypeptide of claim 46; and

(b) a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient.

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